

2025 State of the Cities





About the National League of Cities

The National League of Cities (NLC) is the voice of America's cities, towns and villages, representing more than 200 million people. NLC works to strengthen local leadership, influence federal policy and drive innovative solutions.

About the Center for Research and Data Analysis

NLC's Center for Research and Data provides research and analysis on key topics and trends important to cities, creative solutions to improve the quality of life in communities, inspiration and ideas for local officials to use in tackling tough issues, and opportunities for city leaders to connect with peers, share experiences and learn about innovative approaches in cities.

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Foreword

In the dynamic realm of local governance, the State of the Cities report captures local leaders' collective vision and unwavering commitment. This comprehensive study, backed by a survey of mayors and data from annual mayoral speeches, provides a vital insight into the operations of our cities, towns and villages.

Even though local leaders face challenges, they remain resilient, optimistic and committed to providing services for their residents. While the *State of the Cities* report is largely based on data collected in the first quarter of the calendar year, a supplemental survey conducted by NLC in April 2025 found that, despite federal changes, the top five mayoral priorities remained constant. While national developments have presented new dynamics for local governments across the country to manage in 2025, mayors overwhelmingly spoke about the strength of cities in the face of unpredictability and their commitment to the wellbeing of their local government – another indication of the strength of local leadership in America today.

As we confront the challenges of 2025, the report identifies economic development as a top priority for local leaders. This showcases the determined pursuit of innovation and growth that characterizes our cities' ambitions for economic recovery and advancement. Another top priority is housing, which addresses the urgent need for affordable and accessible shelter for our residents. Infrastructure continues to be a critical focus, with local leaders making it clear

that enhancing water systems, streets, roads, and bridges is essential, along with securing reliable funding to support these initiatives.

Public safety and effective budget management are also at the forefront, emphasizing a governance approach that prioritizes security and sustainability. These aren't just policy points; they are the cornerstones of our communities' future. They represent a firm commitment to progress and stand as a testament to our cities' resilience and adaptability.

The State of the Cities report lays out the challenges our municipalities face and outlines the innovative solutions mayors nationwide are implementing to drive local renewal. The journey ahead is ripe with opportunity, and together, we are poised to transform our cities' landscapes into vibrant spaces of opportunity and inclusiveness for all. Local government is more important than ever.



CLARENCE E. ANTHONY

CEO and Executive
Director National
League of Cities



Introduction

The 12th annual *State of the Cities* report identifies the unique challenges and opportunities facing cities, towns and villages across the United States, offering a comprehensive analysis of community priorities in 2025.

The report synthesizes insights from three primary data sources: mayoral addresses, survey responses and public opinion analysis.

- ◆ Key themes emerged from 53 annual “State of the City” mayoral addresses delivered by local leaders representing all geographic regions and municipal sizes.*
- ◆ More than 230 survey responses shed light on the current perspectives of mayors nationwide.
- ◆ Analysis of social media engagement provided insights into public opinion.

This report spotlights the predominant themes that surfaced across data sources. The priority topic areas across these data sources include economic development, infrastructure, budget and management, housing, and public health and safety. The corresponding sections are structured to present the nuanced challenges confronting municipalities in 2025. The report also highlights real-world strategies and tailored municipal solutions for local leader adoption.

The report weaves in direct quotes from 2025 mayoral addresses, giving voice to the local leaders speaking to – and on behalf of – their communities. By grounding *State of the Cities* in the words of local leaders themselves, readers gain a more expansive understanding of each municipality’s strengths.

* See Appendix A for breakdown of mayoral addresses by region and population size.

STATE OF THE CITIES PRIORITY TOPICS





The *State of the Cities 2025* report demonstrates the resilience of municipal governments by presenting the main priorities for mayors this year and outlining their targeted steps toward positive outcomes.

State of the Cities is based on data collected in the first quarter of 2025,* when most mayors deliver their State of the City addresses, and the report offers a snapshot of mayoral priorities during that time. Since then, national developments have presented new dynamics for local governments across the country to manage. Acknowledging this recent variability, researchers conducted a supplemental analysis of several mayoral speeches delivered in the second (calendar year) quarter of 2025 and cross-referenced these results with a recent survey of NLC members.** While the mayoral priorities of the speeches did not change, many mayors stated their uncertainty stemming from federal changes. These mayors spoke explicitly about the strength of cities in the face of unpredictability and their commitment to the wellbeing of their local government.

Additionally, in an April 2025 NLC survey, local leaders were asked about the areas most impacted by changes to the federal

* January 1st through March 31st, 2025.

** Preliminary results fielded from a survey of NLC members in April and May 2025.

*“The only certainty
is uncertainty.”*

MAYOR BRANDON SCOTT
Baltimore, MD

government's financial and programmatic support. Initial responses show the municipal issues most impacted are economic development, infrastructure and public health and public safety aligning with initial findings. The *State of the Cities* report captures the local government outlook in early 2025, yet ongoing shifts in the local government landscape may influence how the report's findings are interpreted later. Findings from the supplemental analysis reveal that the top five mayoral priorities remain constant, against the backdrop of material changes impacting federal, state and local governments. We encourage readers to keep this context in mind.

Overall, the *State of the Cities 2025* report demonstrates the resilience of municipal governments by presenting the main priorities for mayors this year and outlining their targeted steps toward positive outcomes. Cities are turning significant challenges into opportunities for growth, united by the goal of creating a brighter and more prosperous future for their communities.

NLC remains dedicated to the strengthening and advancement of local government leaders and will continue to highlight the complex challenges local leaders face as they navigate 2025 and beyond.

“I am looking ahead, mindful of the challenges we face, and motivated by the opportunities we share. Our future will be shaped by the depth of our connections, the strength of our partnerships, and our ability to hold our shared values at a time when so much looks to be pulling apart.”

MAYOR KAARIN KNUDSON
Eugene, OR

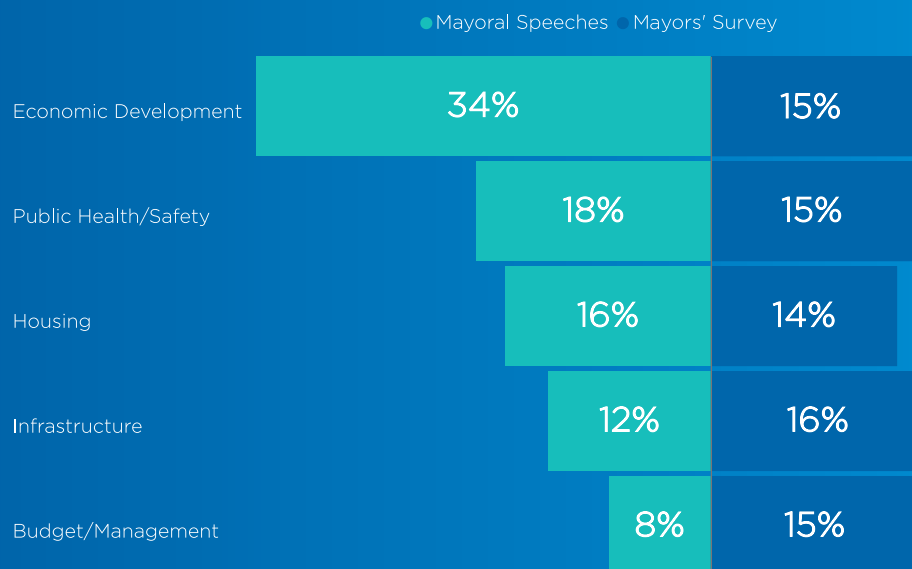
Top Mayoral Priorities in 2025

The same five priorities were ranked the highest in survey responses and mayoral speeches: economic development, infrastructure, budget and management, housing and public health and safety. However, each data source revealed different rankings of mayoral priorities in 2025 due to their inherent data differences.* By synthesizing

FIGURE 1

Economic Development is the Top Mayoral Priority in 2025

TOP 5 MAYORAL PRIORITIES IN 2025, BY DATA SOURCE AND PERCENTAGE OF SPEECHES AND RESPONSES



Source: Content Analysis of Mayoral Speeches for 2025 (n=53), and State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n=238).

Note: For the mayoral speech analysis, Public Safety (11%) and Health and Human Services (7%) were analyzed as distinct categories. In the Mayoral Survey, these two categories were bundled together as "Public Health and Safety." Other categories (beyond the top 5) are not included here. See the Appendix for more information.

* To learn more about the different priority rankings between data sources, see Appendix A.

“As the politics of the world change, one thing is clear: the role of municipal government is more important than ever. Cities will have to be nimble and creative to address the needs of their residents, no matter the turbulence of the times ... cities must always continue to deliver services.”

MAYOR KEITH JAMES
West Palm Beach, FL

34%

TOTAL OVERALL SPEECH
TIME DEDICATED TO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

these primary data sources together, NLC aims to provide a more holistic understanding of mayoral priorities.

Data collected from mayors' State of the City speeches reveal economic development as the most prevalent topic, accounting for 34 percent of the overall speech time. Mayors are focused on attracting and retaining businesses in 2025, with many also highlighting their advancements in attracting innovation and technology hubs. While there are development challenges – from workforce development to reinvestment in downtowns – local leaders are fostering economic recovery and progress.

Analysis indicates **infrastructure** is another prominent topic in 2025, accounting for 12 percent of mayoral speech time. Moreover, infrastructure is the highest-ranked priority for local leaders responding to NLC's survey (See Appendix C Table 1). Priority infrastructure categories are water systems, streets, roads and bridges; mayors also are concerned about resiliency for extreme weather events. Infrastructure needs are strained by the uncertainty of funding streams.

Survey respondents noted that **budget, housing, public health and safety** are among their most important needs for 2025, with over 85 percent of respondents indicating that each of these topics is a priority to address in the upcoming year (See Appendix C Table 1).

Some local leaders note significant budgetary challenges associated with the uncertainty and expiration of federal funding programs. Housing supply and affordability are also key priorities, with leaders launching innovative approaches to expand, preserve and improve local housing availability.

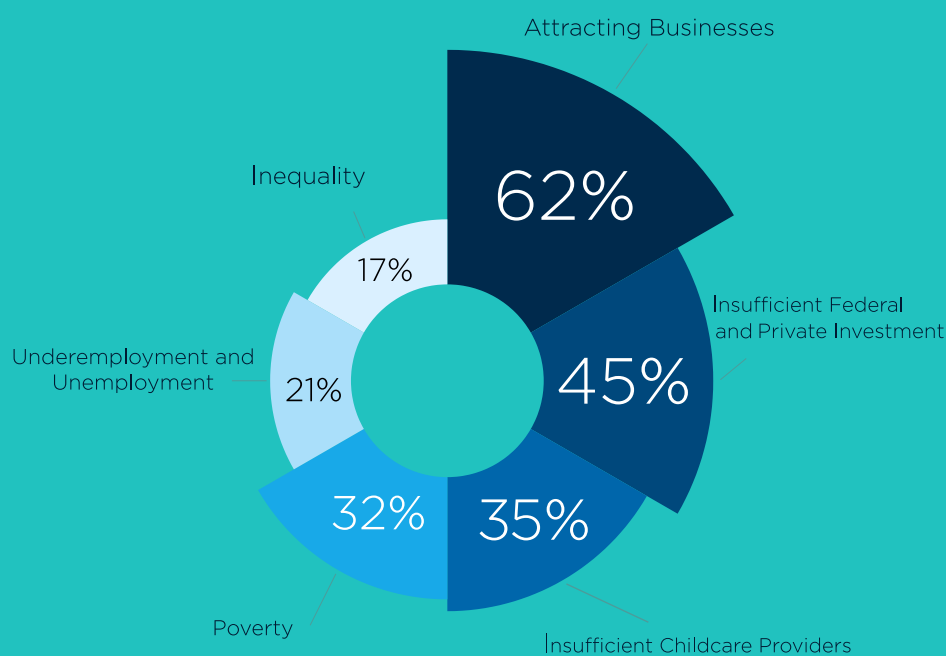
Public health and safety are complex issues, as substance use and mental health crises grow more severe. Mayors are developing strategic interventions for community safety and taking steps to recruit and retain a public safety workforce.

Economic & Workforce Development



Economic development continues to be a major issue for municipal leaders, as indicated not only in the State of the City addresses but via responses to NLC's survey. Similar to 2024, economic development ranks as the top issue among mayoral speeches (34 percent of speech time).

FIGURE 2
Attracting Businesses and Insufficient Federal and Private Investment among Major Economic Challenges Facing Cities
ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACING CITIES IN 2025, BY PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES



85%

RATED ECONOMIC SITUATION AS ACCEPTABLE

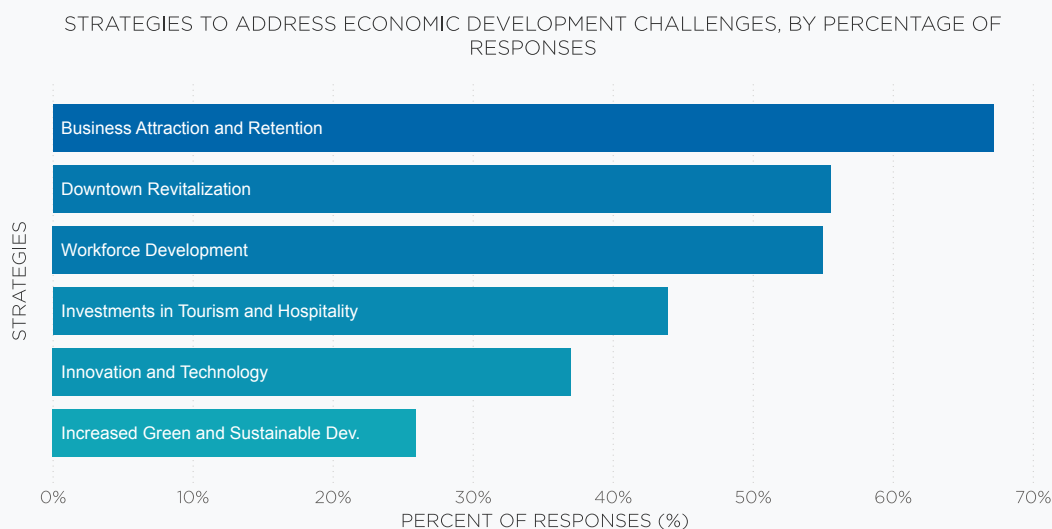
67%

IMPLEMENTED BUSINESS ATTRACTION AND RETENTION STRATEGIES

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n = 193).

Notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. The "Other" category is not displayed in the visualization, but it represents the 26% of the responses.

FIGURE 3
Business Attraction, Downtown Revitalization, and Workforce Development the Most Utilized Strategies by Mayors to Address Economic Development Challenges



Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n = 189).

Note: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents.

“It’s through partnerships with entrepreneurs, developers and small business owners that we have and will continue to work to make our city a place where innovation thrives and local dreams become a reality, while our community grows. We continue to prioritize strategic investments in our downtown to preserve its charm while creating new opportunities for sustainable growth.”

MAYOR JORDAN MARLOWE
Newberry, FL

Survey data shows mayors tackling complex economic development challenges. In NLC’s *State of the Cities 2024*¹ report, about 80 percent of city leaders rated their economic situation as acceptable, good or excellent; this year, the number increased to 85 percent (see Appendix C Table 3). In 2025, 62 percent of local leaders shared that their municipality’s top economic challenge is attracting businesses; this pressure has nearly doubled from last year, when only 33 percent of mayors pinpointed this.² Mayors are taking action to address this concern in 2025, with 67 percent reporting they have implemented business attraction and retention strategies.

Innovation & Technology

Success stories of attracting and retaining businesses stem from cities at the forefront of innovation and technology. Investments in technological industries and innovation hubs give municipalities a competitive edge as they interweave economic development strategies: such investments can nurture new businesses, upskill

“On Main, Ohio’s second Innovation Hub: Envision a collaborative community where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies connect with startups, business incubators and accelerators. The hub will lead to 2,000 new jobs, more than \$39 million in additional state and local income tax revenue and \$500 million in new research dollars. In addition, On Main is estimated to produce 3,000 new STEM graduates and certificates.”

MAYOR JEFFREY J. MIMS, JR.

Dayton, OH

the local workforce through hand-on experience, and connect established companies with fresh talent and ideas. Technology and innovation hubs not only strengthen local economies today but lay the groundwork for future economic prosperity.

Workforce Development

Cities are prioritizing workforce development as a key strategy to promote economic growth and are investing in programs that provide career-connected learning opportunities for residents.

A 2024 NLC member survey highlighted that municipal leaders recognize providing wrap-around services like childcare and transportation as critical to workforce participation and training efforts. Local leaders identified K-12 schools, community and technical colleges, workforce development boards and local employers as critical workforce development partners.³

For many workers, 2025 has marked a significant increase in return-to-office mandates. The percentage of workers mandated to work in person at least four days per week doubled between 2023 (34%) and 2024 (68%).⁴ This may restore the role of downtowns as employment hubs in the city landscape.



Credit: Murals in downtown Kansas. Photo by: Allan Baxter via Getty Images.

“... Large corporations [are] transitioning staff back to filling office space in a post-COVID marketplace. Richardson stands out as one of the DFW area’s prime locations for this return, and its resurgence is a top priority for the city’s management and economic development team.”

MAYOR BOB DUBEY
Richardson, TX

Downtown Revitalization

Correspondingly, 56 percent of respondents are focusing on downtown revitalization to spur economic development. Local leaders note that downtown revitalization efforts require new investments and collaboration with community members to strike a balance between historical context and forward-looking strategies in downtown areas.⁵

Additionally, many mayoral addresses highlight the efforts of local artists to shape a community's character.

- ◆ **Sparks, NV** commissioned a new public art sculpture for the city's downtown, in addition to commissioning local artists to paint signal boxes on the city streets.
- ◆ **Garland, TX** launched an art walk to engage residents with downtown galleries.
- ◆ **Springboro, OH** highlighted its Performing Arts Center, bringing live performances and art exhibits to residents year-round.

Local artists can serve as a focal point for community revitalization, facilitating community collaboration and creativity to pave the way for healthier cities.⁶

Mayors report confidence in their local economies, as evidenced by the multitude of development strategies they are taking on in 2025. While challenges persist, municipal leaders continue to focus on and foster growth.

“Our new comprehensive plan, Garland Forward, is coming soon ... [it] will ensure that our development decisions remain responsive to our community.”

MAYOR SCOTT LEMAY
Garland, TX



Credit: Wynwood District Miami Design District, Miami, Florida.
Photo by Leonardo Ampuero via Getty Images

KEY NLC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES:

[*How Tariffs Could Impact Local Government Budgets*](#)

[*A Decade of Municipal Financial Empowerment Strategies: Findings from a 2024 Field Scan*](#)

[*Lessons from the 2023-2024 Cities of Opportunity Action Cohort*](#)

[*Advancing Economic Resilience and Equity: Progress, Successes and Lessons from the Southern Cities Economic Initiative*](#)

[*Creativity and Collaboration for Healthier Cities*](#)

[*Workforce Development 101: A Primer for Municipal Leaders*](#)



Infrastructure

Infrastructure is an essential investment for communities across the nation. It encompasses vital municipal systems that individuals rely on every day – streets and roads, bridges, water systems, rail and public transportation networks, broadband internet and more.

Local leaders responding to NLC’s Municipal Infrastructure Conditions survey indicate that water systems – including drinking water, wastewater and stormwater – are the most needed infrastructure projects. Water systems support healthy households and provide services to sustain vitality for individuals and communities. According to the 2022 Census of Governments, local governments fund over 98% of all capital, operational and maintenance investments in drinking water, wastewater and sewer infrastructure,

“In 2025, we are making significant investments in infrastructure to ensure that every neighborhood is safer, more walkable and more connected.”

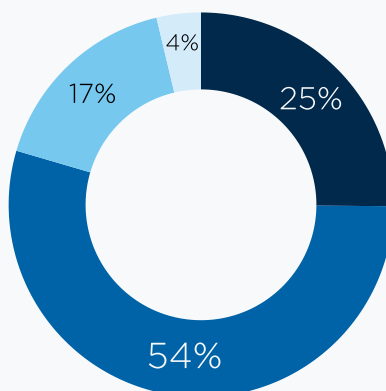
MAYOR FRANK SCOTT JR.
Little Rock, AR

FIGURE 4

Majority of Mayors Feel Somewhat Prepared for Natural Disaster or Emergencies

PREPAREDNESS FOR NATURAL DISASTERS OR EMERGENCIES THAT MAY AFFECT LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE, BY PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES

● Very Prepared ● Somewhat Prepared ● Not Very Prepared ● Not Prepared At All



Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n = 215).

Note: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question.

“Water is essential for our daily lives. But more than that, our water is exceptional: as one of the last municipally owned utilities in Connecticut, our water company is a precious and essential asset. That’s why we’ve placed such a strong emphasis on fortifying our systems and developing a reliable backup plan, especially in light of recurring droughts that we experience almost every decade.”

MAYOR ERIN STEWART
City of New Britain, CT

investing over \$2.38 trillion from 1993 to 2019 and over \$150 billion in 2022 alone.⁷

Many priority infrastructure projects in 2025 also focus on connectivity in and around cities, towns and villages. Mayors are investing in repairs and upgrades to streets, roads and bridges to enhance transportation and mobility and residents.

Despite such investments in new and necessary infrastructure projects, many local leaders report serious concerns around aging infrastructure systems and vulnerability to the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather events. **Only 25 percent of city leaders are Very Prepared for natural disasters or emergencies that may impact local infrastructure in 2025.** In 2024, there were 27 extreme weather events, with associated losses of over \$1 billion each.⁸ The disaster events in 2024 greatly eclipse the historical average of nine events from 1980 to 2024, indicating that the frequency of natural disasters – and the associated impact on communities – is increasing.

The high costs associated with infrastructure maintenance and replacement also pose a serious problem for municipalities.



\$8 B

SPENT ON INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS IN CITIES WITH MORE
THAN 250,000 RESIDENTS.

The most common financial challenges for priority infrastructure projects are the rising costs of project materials and labor, in addition to insufficient capital budgets (See Appendix C Table 6).

In recent years, municipalities had more access to infrastructure financing through federal funding streams. For example, the 2021 *American Rescue Plan Act*⁹ (ARPA), a \$1.9-trillion economic stimulus bill, provided \$350 billion to state and local governments as part of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF), which allowed for essential water and internet upgrades

in particular. As of June 2024, local governments with populations over 250,000 residents had allocated more than \$8 billion to infrastructure projects.¹⁰ By December 2026, local government recipients must spend down all of their ARPA funding,¹¹ and the vast majority of survey respondents (81%) indicated that the end of this funding will negatively impact their infrastructure spending priorities (See Appendix C Table 7, respondents answering *Most Likely* and *Likely*).

Local governments also received historic access to support for rebuilding local infrastructure through the

*Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*¹² (IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law).¹³ As of data from January 2025, over 1,500 cities, towns and villages have been awarded \$28.3 billion in direct federal grants to rebuild municipal infrastructure,¹⁴ and NLC's *Local Infrastructure Hub*¹⁵ has helped to train thousands of cities, towns and villages on how to access federal infrastructure grants. However, IIJA funding is expiring in 2026, similar to the conclusion

of ARPA. Considering the end of these two significant funding streams, local leaders may be faced with a funding “cliff” while still facing critical infrastructure needs, without adequate resources to address them.

Even faced with funding challenges and the increased threat of disasters, local leaders continue to invest in the production and preservation of much-needed infrastructure systems for the health and connectivity of their residents.

KEY NLC INFRASTRUCTURE RESOURCES:

[*Interactive Rail Safety Map: See Derailments in Communities Across the U.S.*](#)

[*Municipal Infrastructure Conditions 2023*](#)

[*Rebuilding America: Tracking Federal Investment in Local Infrastructure Projects*](#)

[*What Local Officials Should Do When Facing a Wildfire: Navigating Disaster Response and Recovery*](#)

“We’re moving from band-aid solutions to comprehensive infrastructure improvements because our residents deserve nothing less.”

MAYOR CARMELLA MANTELLO
City of Troy, NY





Budget & Management



2025 has already marked a difficult financial year in many communities. Households are feeling the impacts of rising grocery bills and steep housing costs,¹⁶ and economic experts are forecasting an increased likelihood of a U.S. recession in 2025.¹⁷ As community leaders, mayors feel the brunt of these

financial challenges and have a responsibility to offer stability to their residents. Local leaders report budget and management topics among their chief concerns this year.

Budgets serve as essential components of local governance that reflect changing

economic and social conditions.¹⁸ **Sound budgets and effective management are vital in facilitating city services, as they stabilize communities and advance progress.** Budget and management was the second most important priority identified in survey responses, though these topics made

up only 8 percent of overall speech time.*

“With a budget that supports key services and introduces new community initiatives, Richardson continues to embrace big ideas to drive progress and build a brighter future.”

MAYOR BOB DUBEY
Richardson, TX

As mentioned in the *Infrastructure* section of this report, municipal budgets may face uncertainty as the conclusions of federal funding programs – ARPA and IIJA – grow closer. The U.S. Department of

the Treasury delivered critical revenue replacement funds to cities as part of ARPA’s SLFRF program, supplementing municipal budgets to sustain local service provision and support economic recovery.¹⁹ ARPA stabilized municipal budgets throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, guaranteeing direct funding to cities, towns and villages of all sizes across the United States. With the conclusion of ARPA in sight, municipal leaders may be bracing for impact: 69 percent of mayors responding to NLC’s survey indicate **the end of ARPA in 2026 is likely to negatively impact both their budget and their city management** (See Appendix C Table 8).

Additionally, municipalities are facing unique uncertainties associated with the changing federal administration. Given the current administration’s actions to reduce federal spending, local government’s ability to regularly access federal grant funding awarded to them remains uncertain.²⁰ **Congress has also threatened the status of tax-exempt municipal bonds, which are crucial tools to finance infrastructure projects and essential public services.**²¹ NLC is committed to advocating on behalf of cities and strengthening federal-local partnerships, specifically fighting to preserve funding, financing, tax credits and programs that support local governments.²²



* To learn more about how different data sources ranked budget and management, see Appendix A.

Responding to Uncertainty

Local leaders are armed with solutions. To cope with budget uncertainties and risks, survey respondents indicated that they most commonly maintain a contingency fund for emergencies or unforeseen events (see Appendix C Table 8). As reported in NLC's *City Fiscal Conditions 2024*²³ report, the majority of cities across the nation have built a healthy rainy-day fund reserve over the last few years. These have not only helped them bounce back from COVID-19 recession shocks but will also assist in weathering the current uncertain fiscal landscape. Local leaders also prioritize flexible policies that enable them to

adapt swiftly to changing circumstances. And, in times of crisis, some municipalities may seek assistance from other levels of government or external organizations while others expand their funding sources.

Local leaders are also responding to the needs of their residents. NLC's 2024 *Economic Empowerment Field Scan*²⁴ revealed nearly three out of four cities have either sustained or increased the number of individuals served by financial empowerment programming. Homeowner assistance, small business support and financial education are the most common programs offered by these cities, while benefits access and awareness programs represent some of the longest-running

financial empowerment initiatives among them.

No matter the budgetary challenges, mayors actively seek solutions to strengthen the financial stability of their residents and communities.

KEY NLC BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT RESOURCES:

[*City Fiscal Conditions 2024*](#)

[*Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker*](#)

[*America was Built by Bonds*](#)

[*Priorities, Barriers & Opportunities in the Municipal Budgeting Process*](#)





Housing

In recent years, housing has emerged as a key issue for cities, towns and villages across America. Housing stability is a significant factor in driving economic mobility and individual well-being. As housing crises continue to plague communities across the nation²⁵ – challenges associated with inadequate housing supply, unaffordable options, low housing quality and more – municipalities are being asked more than ever to provide secure and accessible housing units for their residents.

The topic of housing is multifaceted, requiring creative, collaborative solutions that may financially strain communities. Yet mayors are taking action to address the housing crisis in their communities. **This year, housing is the third most common mayoral speech topic (16 percent of speech time).** In both 2024 and 2025, NLC's

"In 2025 I will be focused on removing barriers to grow and develop in our neighborhoods and creating housing opportunities for people that want to live in Augusta."

**MAYOR GARNETT
L. JOHNSON**
Augusta, GA

70%

OF MAYORS REPORT CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE LACK OF HOUSING SUPPLY IN 2025

State of the Cities reports reveal housing as a top priority for local leaders.

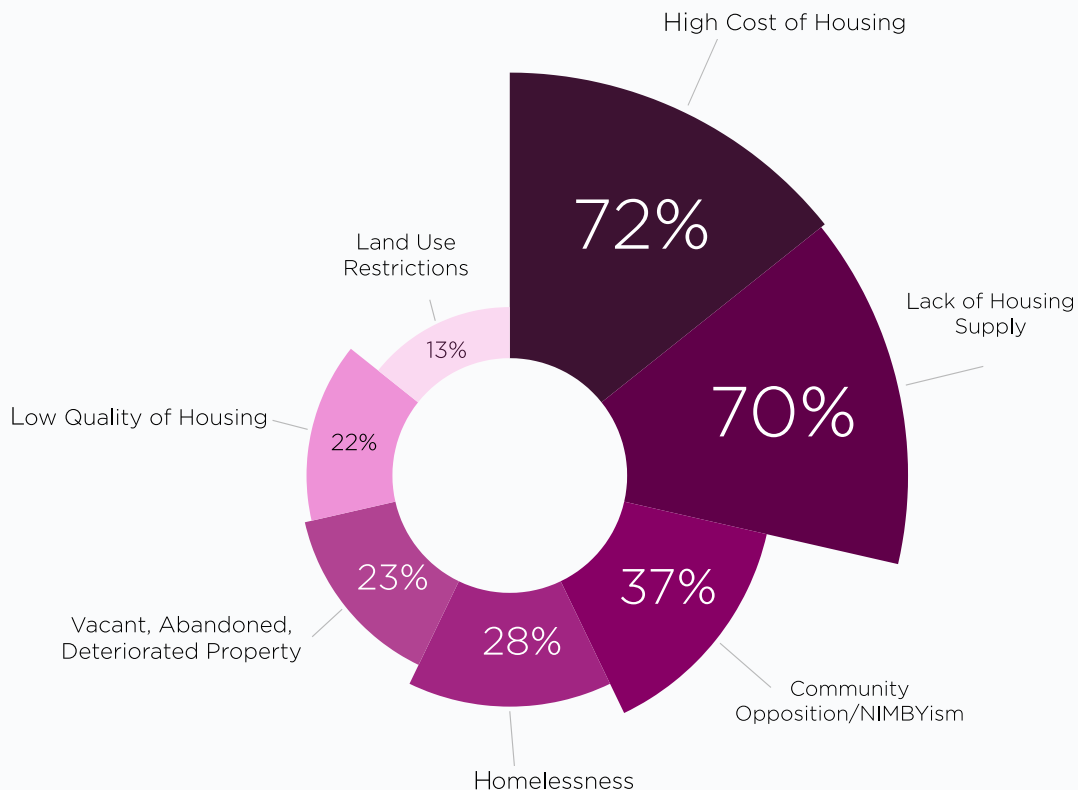
Housing supply and availability is the most severe concern for local leaders, with 57 percent of survey respondents rating the availability of housing in their community as *Poor* or *Very Poor* (See Appendix C). A tightening construction industry with increasing costs,

higher interest rates and restrictive local policies has made it difficult for communities to build new housing stock.²⁶ Local infrastructure needs – and prohibitive infrastructure costs – also prevent cities from expanding local housing supply, as explained in *Infrastructure's Role in Housing Development*. Experts estimate the current national housing shortage is approximately

FIGURE 5

High Costs and Lack of Supply among the Main Housing Challenges for Cities

MAIN HOUSING CHALLENGES FACING CITIES, BY PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES



Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n=172).

Note: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. NIMBYism, or "Not In My Backyard", refers to residents' opposition to proposed real estate and infrastructure developments in their local area and support for strict land use regulations.

3.7 million units,²⁷ with the recent slowdown of housing construction halting progress.²⁸ Seventy percent of mayors report challenges associated with the lack of housing supply in 2025.

“Earlier this year, the Town Council approved the 2024–2025 Cary Housing and Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Draft Plan..... this plan will support the construction of 226 new affordable housing units and the preservation of 29 existing affordable homes.”

MAYOR HAROLD WEINBRECHT
Cary, NC

The other primary challenge identified by 72 percent of mayors is the high cost of housing. **Housing affordability** concerns are intertwined with housing supply issues, as limited availability drives up prices.²⁹

The high costs of housing may impact local leaders in two ways. First, it is costly to develop housing projects, as the difference between

projected costs and available funding sources often leads to a housing funding gap.³⁰ Second, high costs of housing directly impact residents and community members. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “affordable housing” as housing for which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities.³¹ As home prices continue to rise – even in previously affordable markets like the Northeast and Midwest³² – the cost burdens associated with homeownership pose severe challenges.

“Safety and opportunity are impossible without a place to call home.”

MAYOR ERIN MENDENHALL
Salt Lake City, UT

Mayors recognize the housing crisis will not have a “one size fits all” solution. In cities, towns and villages, local leaders are launching innovative solutions to address housing – but they cannot solve the crisis alone.





◆ **Augusta, GA** plans to work with private developers to increase the construction of single-family homes and investors to increase commercial development.

◆ **Memphis, TN** is actively addressing properties that are fostering unsafe and unsavory conditions by creating cross-training and information sharing between municipal departments.

Local governments have utilized billions of ARPA SLFRF dollars toward housing initiatives to address homelessness, affordable housing, rental assistance and other housing activities. Various federal and state government programs also facilitate housing production and preservation at the local level, underscoring the

all-hands-on-deck approach to addressing local housing needs.

Just as cooperation is imperative throughout multiple levels of government, so are public-private strategies that remove development barriers and facilitate housing finance. Across the United States, local leaders rely on innovative strategies, cross-sector partnerships, and policy measures to enhance housing supply and affordability.

NLC's [*Housing Supply Accelerator*](#)³³ helps municipalities tackle their housing challenges, providing multilayered approaches to expand, preserve and improve local housing conditions through key resources such as the [*Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook*](#)³⁴ and the [*Filling the Gap Tool*](#).³⁵

“Our administration is committed to providing the tools and support needed to make homeownership and property investment more accessible, helping you turn these once-forgotten spaces into places of pride and community.”

MAYOR CARMELLA MANTELLO
City of Troy, NY

KEY NLC HOUSING RESOURCES:

[*Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook*](#)

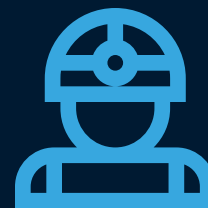
[*Filling the Gap Tool: Unlocking Housing Finance*](#)

[*Housing Supply is a High Priority for Local Governments*](#)

[*Local Eviction Prevention Policy and Program Tool*](#)

[*America's Housing Comeback*](#)

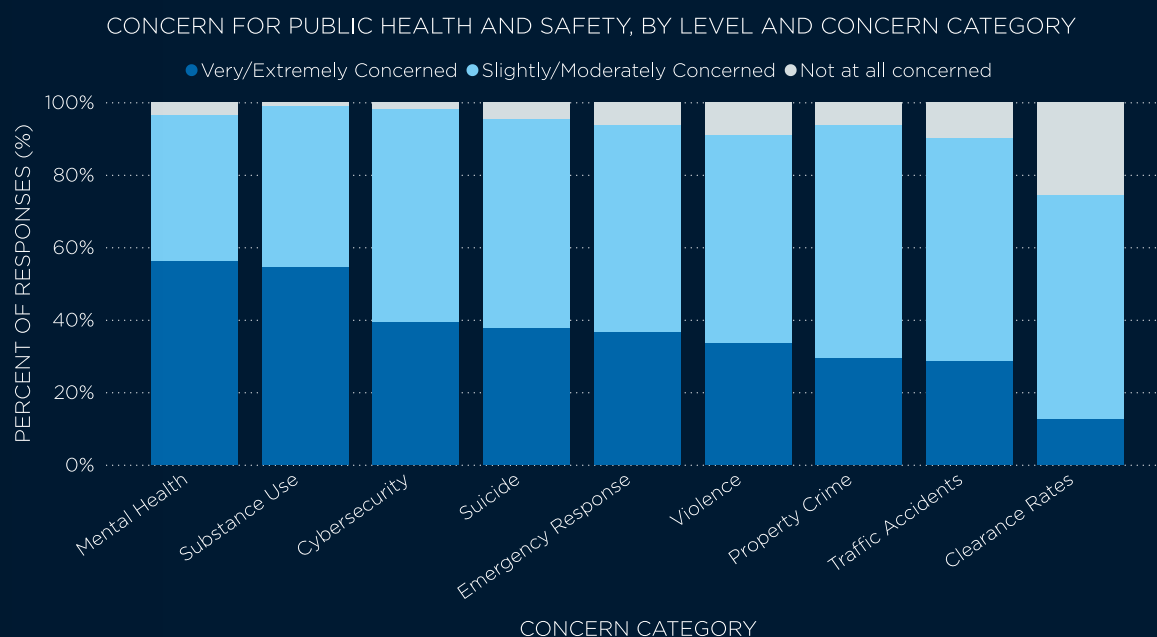
Public Health & Safety



Significant concerns around mental health and suicide dominate public health and safety discussions in NLC’s 2025 survey, with 96 percent and 95 percent of mayors concerned, respectively (including responses indicating *Slightly*, *Moderately*, *Very* or *Extremely Concerned*).

Public health and safety are among the top priorities overall in the 2025 mayoral speeches (18 percent of speech time overall*) and these topics rank as high priorities in the survey.* Public safety is the foundation of community well-being, as it allows

FIGURE 6
Mental Health, Substance Use and Cybersecurity Among the Most Concerning Public Health/Safety Issues for American Mayors



Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Note: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Sample size (n) varies depending on the category, ranging from n=110 for "Violence" to n=10 for "Other" (not shown).

* For the mayoral speech analysis, Public Safety (11%) and Health and Human Services (7%) were analyzed as distinct categories. In the mayoral survey, these two categories were bundled together as "Public Health and Safety."

“In West Palm Beach, we recognize that a safe environment encourages families to settle down, helps businesses flourish and motivates a community to replace fear with freedom.”

MAYOR KEITH JAMES
West Palm Beach, FL

residents to move freely through their communities and facilitates opportunity for youth.

At the end of 2024, many cities demonstrated lower crime incidents than the year prior, with violent crime rates even dropping to pre-pandemic levels.³⁶ Yet 94 percent of survey respondents indicate that property crime is on their

list of concerns in 2025 and about one-third are *Very* or *Extremely Concerned*.

The landscape of public safety is changing in 2025, with modern technology posing new threats to cities and their residents. Ninety-eight percent of local leaders expressed concern around cybersecurity in the survey (including responses indicating *Slightly*, *Moderately*, *Very* or *Extremely Concerned*). **Research shows that cyberattacks on municipal governments are rising quickly, revealing vulnerabilities and inflicting financial damage.**³⁷

The complexity of the cybersecurity landscape is exacerbated by a growing technological skill gap, which poses additional challenges for local governments that may have limited capabilities.³⁸

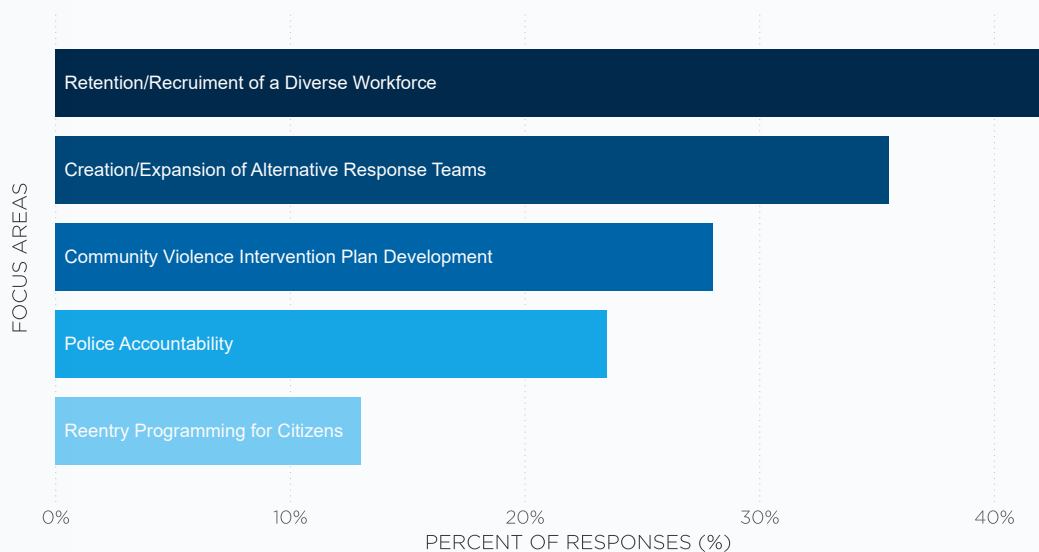
Moreover, there are ongoing concerns around public health as a priority issue among mayors in 2025. **Ninety-nine percent of survey respondents indicated they were concerned about substance use** (including responses indicating *Slightly*, *Moderately*, *Very* or *Extremely Concerned*). National drug overdose deaths increased greatly from 1999 to 2022, largely driven by the increase in opioid overdoses.³⁹ Declining national overdose deaths⁴⁰ may indicate that leaders are taking action to halt substance use issues in their communities, but more recent increased use of fentanyl and synthetic opioids poses severe and unforeseen challenges for communities. As part of the *Substance Use: Supporting City Solutions Initiative*,⁴¹ NLC



FIGURE 7

Retention, Recruitment and Creation or Expansion of Alternative Crisis Response Teams Are Top Priorities for Mayors in 2025

PUBLIC SAFETY FOCUS AREA, BY PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES



Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n=95).

Note: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents.

“... We’ll modernize our city’s financial operations with updated technology that enhances efficiency and transparency ... These improvements, coupled with strengthened cybersecurity, aren’t just upgrades – they’re investments in protecting our city and ensuring we’re prepared for the future.”

MAYOR CARMELLA MANTELLO
City of Troy, NY

has called on Congress and the administration to ensure that federal funds appropriated for substance abuse, treatment, prevention and recovery programs are accessible to cities, towns and villages.

Given the focus on behavioral health in public safety, many cities are implementing alternative crisis response teams in 2025 (over one-fourth of survey responses). Alternative response teams or “co-responder models” focus on de-escalation and behavioral health service provision,

providing a people-centric approach to crises of mental health, substance use disorder, homelessness and more.⁴² Alternative response models can ease the burden on law enforcement and promote mental health initiatives in communities but also require a different approach to workforce development, which many cities are exploring. NLC’s *Reimagining Public Safety Impact Updates*⁴³ offer insight into municipal co-responder models, providing case studies with key statistics on program outcomes.

“We are transforming the culture of LMPD and providing the tools they need to be the most trained, trusted and transparent police department in America ... And we’re working with researchers from Ohio State University to help us evaluate processes, policies and practices in real time so we can accelerate reforms, improve transparency and better serve the people of Louisville.”

MAYOR CRAIG GREENBERG
Louisville, KY

Public Safety Workforce

Law enforcement personnel are an essential pillar of the public safety ecosystem, yet recruitment and retention of a diverse public safety workforce is a severe issue requiring attention in cities. In 2024, a survey conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) revealed that over 70 percent of member agencies found recruitment more challenging in 2024 than in 2019.⁴⁴ Elected officials can take an active role in supporting police recruitment and retention programs, such as pushing for modernized training methods, prioritizing officer wellness and driving a positive culture.⁴⁵

Local leaders are facing pressing public health and safety issues, representative of the evolving challenges in municipalities. Recognizing that changes are needed, mayors are committing to immediate interventions while also investing in long-term planning for the health and safety of their communities.

KEY NLC PUBLIC SAFETY RESOURCES:

[Opportunity & Impact: Investing in City & Community Partnerships Toward Safety](#)

[Reimagining Public Safety Impact Updates](#)

[Public Safety Workforce in the Post-COVID Era](#)

[Substance Use: Supporting City Solutions](#)



Alignment with Public Priorities

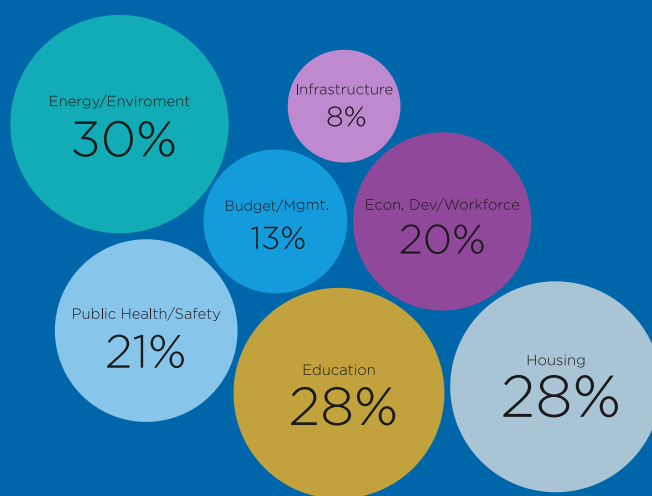
Analyzing State of the City addresses and survey responses, NLC grasps mayoral priorities by hearing from local leaders themselves. However, it is also vital to understand public opinion by looking into the top resident priorities in 2025. Considering how mayoral priorities align with those of their residents fosters a deeper understanding of the issues municipalities face today.

“The state of our city is only as strong as the hands of who you put her in, and those hands aren’t just the hands of a single mayor – they’re the hands of all of us working together to secure the future of New Britain.”

MAYOR ERIN STEWART
City of New Britain, CT

FIGURE 8
Energy/Environment and Education Garnered the Most Attention from Citizens in 2024-2025

MOST FREQUENT TOPICS SHARED BY RESIDENTS,
BY PERCENTAGE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Source: Data gathered from the Quorum Local Platform from March 30, 2024 to March 30, 2025

Note: Public Engagement on X (i.e., the platform formerly known as Twitter) measures the ratio of posts issued by local authorities to the number of times these posts were shared by residents within each category. The sample for tweets and retweets differs from one another, ranging from the highest ratio found for Energy and Environment category, with a total share of 30 % (553 tweets and 167 retweets), to the smallest share for Infrastructure category with the 8% (2,818 tweets and 18 retweets).

To understand public sentiment regarding the analyzed categories, NLC considered public engagement on the social network X (formerly Twitter). This platform allows for the calculation of how often posts made by local officials are reshared by users, enabling the measurement of public engagement.* Interestingly, residents most frequently reshared topics excluded from the top mayoral priorities: energy and environment (30%) and education (28%). However, residents

also indicated their interest in two key mayoral priorities for 2025: housing (28%) and public health and safety (21%)."

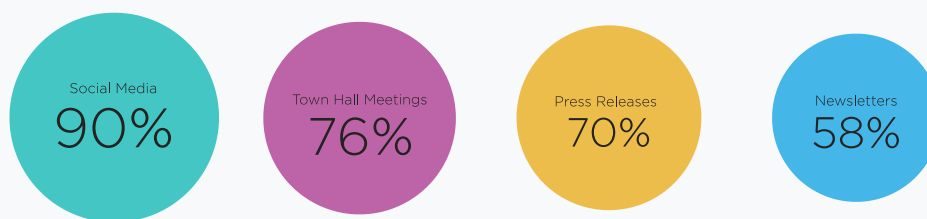
"If we want solutions, we have to make an inventory of concerns. We brainstormed, checked social media postings and read Common Council meeting minutes."

MAYOR WILLIAM J. "BILL" AIELLO, Olean, NY

Cities, towns and villages use a variety of tactics to keep their residents engaged, ranging from traditional municipal governance strategies to more innovative communication channels. Three-quarters of mayors in the survey use town hall meetings to communicate with residents. Press releases and newsletters were also notable communication methods for 70 percent and 58 percent of respondents, respectively. In 2025, social media is the most prominent

FIGURE 9 Mayors Primarily Engage Residents Through Social Media and Town Hall Meetings

OUTLETS USED BY MAYORS TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR RESIDENTS, BY PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES



Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n=189).

Note: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question - respondents were able to select multiple options. Hence, the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents.

* For more information on the methodology used to assess public opinion, see Appendix A.

** To learn more about the differences in mayoral and public priorities, see Appendix A.

strategy by far, with 90 percent of mayors indicating this form of digital engagement is essential for keeping citizens up to date. Social media allows for real-time interaction and feedback, which facilitate local leaders' connections to their community member needs and challenges.

However, local leaders are facing high rates of harassment and incivility from their constituents. **A 2024 NLC survey revealed 73 percent of respondents have personally experienced harassment and 21 percent of respondents know colleagues, employees or other municipal staff who**

have experienced it.⁴⁶ Of the local leaders who experienced harassment, 89 percent faced it on social media and 84 percent experienced harassment at public meetings.

NLC's report *On the Frontlines of Today*⁴⁷ provides a roadmap for local leaders to turn around the trend of increased political harassment. By highlighting real-world examples of civil discourse, transparent communication methods and inclusive decision-making practices, local leaders can continue building trust with residents and strengthening their communities.

"We're breaking down barriers and making city government more accessible, visible and responsive to the needs of our communities."

MAYOR FRANK SCOTT JR.
Little Rock, AR

KEY NLC RESOURCES:

[Promoting Healthy Community Dialogue: Civic Discourse 101](#)

[Innovative Approaches to Civic Engagement](#)

[Making Public Meetings Accessible to All](#)



Conclusion

“These challenges also highlighted what makes us strong: our ability to adapt, collaborate and innovate.”

MAYOR KENNETH T. WELCH
St. Petersburg, FL

The State of the Cities report offers a holistic look into the most pressing priorities cities, towns and villages are facing in 2025. The report highlights the perspectives and voices of local leaders by synthesizing findings from mayoral speeches, nationwide survey responses and social media analysis of public opinion.

Overall, municipalities are facing significant challenges in 2025. Municipal leaders anticipate projected increases in costs to deliver services and address resident needs, in addition to the anticipated reduction in federal investment. Localities across the country are rebuilding their infrastructure systems after extreme weather and disaster events. And communities are experiencing severe housing shortages without adequate resources to increase accessible supply.

Municipal leaders are under pressure, yet they are armed with actionable solutions. In annual mayoral addresses, elected officials addressed their residents with rousing, hopeful speeches that highlight the strength of their community’s character.





*“The Salt Lake City
of tomorrow depends
on the decisions we
make today.”*

MAYOR ERIN MENDENHALL
Salt Lake City, UT

Rather than focus solely on the pressing challenges of the time, mayors highlighted new initiatives, spoke to the strength of their municipal workforce and offered optimistic forecasts for the year to come. Municipalities are finding creative ways to diversify funding streams, launch housing solutions, create safer cities and spark economic growth.

For over 100 years,⁴⁸ NLC has supported mayors, city council members and municipal government staff by providing unparalleled research, leading technical expertise and transformative advocacy campaigns. NLC will continue to champion the local-federal partnership through the 2025 Federal Action Agenda⁴⁹ and celebrate local government for years to come.

This year’s State of the Cities report highlights pressing challenges across the top priorities: economic development, infrastructure, budget, housing, and public health and safety. However, the report emphasizes, above all else, the resilience of municipalities. Local leaders are solutions-oriented and committed to improving the quality of life for their residents. United by their belief in a brighter future, municipal leaders are paving the way for progress in cities, towns and villages across the United States.

Appendices

Appendix A: Methodology

For this report, the National League of Cities (NLC) employed three different methodologies: a content analysis of mayors' State of the City Addresses, a survey of mayors, and a quantitative analysis of public engagement with the mayors' priorities. We gathered and analyzed data from three distinct sources for these various methods.

A) MAYORAL SPEECHES

We conducted a content analysis of 53 State of the City (SOTC) addresses delivered by U.S. mayors between January 1st and March 31st, 2025. Mayoral speeches were

collected from municipal governments' official websites. Each week during the analysis window, a search was conducted on Google for the most recent speeches. The cities were identified, and the speeches were located either on their official websites or through the streaming channels that made them public. At the time of this analysis, these 53 SOTC speeches were the only ones the researchers had the capacity to locate online and then code.

To analyze each SOTC address delivered, we focused only on the forward-looking and actionable

plans expressed by mayors in their speeches. We then categorized these plans into one of the following priority categories: Budget and Management, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Housing, Public Safety, Education, Data and Technology, Health and Human Services, and Energy and Environment. We counted the words used in the speeches as a proxy for each Mayor's time discussing that specific topic for each category. Lastly, we calculated the ratio of the number of words counted for each category to the total number of words counted in each speech.

TABLE 1
Percentage of Speeches by Region and Population Category

Region/ Population Category	<10,000 (%)	10,000- 49,999 (%)	50,000- 99,999 (%)	100,000- 299,999 (%)	300,000+ (%)	Total
South (%)	1.89	5.66	9.43	16.98	5.66	39.62
Northeast/ Mid-Atlantic (%)	1.89	11.32	3.77	5.66	1.89	24.53
West (%)	0	1.89	5.66	7.55	7.55	22.64
Midwest (%)	0	9.43	1.89	1.89	0	13.21
Total	3.77	28.3	20.75	32.08	15.09	100

Source: Content Analysis of Mayoral Speeches Given between January-March 2025 (N=53). Regions are based on NLC service regions (<https://www.nlc.org/membership/>). Population data drawn from U.S. 2020 Census.

B) MAYORS SURVEY

NLC conducted a survey targeting a diverse sample of mayors from cities of various sizes across the country (all members of the NLC) to identify their top priorities for 2025. The survey was distributed to 2,327 mayors and was open for responses from February 25, 2025, to March 31, 2025. In total, 238 mayors completed the survey and are included in our analysis.

Survey respondents were asked to assess different topics in the

following categories: Budget and Management; Economic and Workforce Development; Infrastructure; Housing; Public Health and Safety; Early Childhood, K-12, and Postsecondary Education; and Energy and Environment (contact authors for the instrument).

The distribution of populations among the responding cities is mostly balanced across the different population size categories. A higher percentage of respondents come from cities with fewer than

10,000 residents and those with populations ranging from 10,000 to 49,999, while cities with more than 300,000 residents represent a smaller percentage of survey respondents. This matches the distribution of cities nationwide by population size. Regarding regional distribution, we noticed a low response rate from the Northeast census region and relatively balanced responses from the other regions.

TABLE 2
Percentage of Survey Responses by Region
and Population Category

Region/ Population Category	<10,000 (%)	10,000- 49,999 (%)	50,000- 99,999 (%)	100,000- 299,999 (%)	300,000+ (%)	Total
South (%)	26.05	11.76	2.52	2.94	1.68	44.96
West (%)	15.13	6.3	2.94	3.78	0	28.15
Midwest (%)	4.2	7.98	1.68	2.1	0.42	16.39
Northeast/Mid-Atlantic (%)	5.04	2.94	0.84	0	0	8.82
Puerto Rico (%)	0	1.26	0	0	0.42	1.68
Total	50.42	30.25	7.98	8.82	2.52	100

Source: NLC analysis of data from the State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (n=238). Regions are based on NLC service regions (<https://www.nlc.org/membership/>). Population data drawn from U.S. 2020 Census.

C) PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

We analyzed social media engagement to understand residents' sentiments regarding government priorities. To conduct this analysis, we gathered data from the Quorum Local Platform. Our study focused on the most frequently used hashtags on X (i.e., the platform formerly known as Twitter) from April 1, 2024, to April 1, 2025, for the same main categories as those used in the survey: Budget and Management; Economic and Workforce Development; Infrastructure; Housing; Public Health and Safety; Early Childhood, K-12, and Postsecondary Education; and Energy and Environment.⁵⁰

Public engagement is defined as the ratio of posts issued by local authorities to the number of times residents share these posts within each category. If you require further information, please feel free to contact the authors.⁵¹

When analyzing public opinion, literature highlights two primary reasons for choosing X over other social platforms like Facebook. First, its reach is significant; while Facebook focuses on private groups, X enables users to view third-party posts. Second, and more importantly for this project, the primary purpose of X users is to stay informed about global events and developments, contrasting with Facebook, which emphasizes maintaining connections with close friends and family.⁵²

D) DATA LIMITATIONS

As the three main data sources used for this report (mayoral speeches, the mayor's survey, and social media) are inherently different, there are discrepancies in findings. The differences in priority rankings between the survey findings and mayoral speeches may be attributed to the following reasons:

- While mayoral speeches provide public opportunities to discuss municipal plans and initiatives, survey responses consist of private, written replies to an anonymous survey. The survey may also allow mayors to convey more nuance and detail regarding specific topics.
- For example, the Budget and Management was the second top priority in the survey but this topic ranked much lower in the mayoral speech time (8 percent of speech time). This difference in findings may be explained by mayors viewing their State of the City addresses as opportunities to showcase their future plans or describe groundbreaking city initiatives – budgetary concerns may not be highlighted on such occasions. City leaders may have ranked budget more highly in the survey, not only because it was conducted anonymously but also because respondents may have had more time to express their nuanced budgetary concerns thoroughly.

Two reasons may explain the gap between mayoral and public priorities:

1. The source used to measure public engagement: While the report analyzes public engagement on social media, literature reveals that politicians believe direct contact with citizens is the most effective way to learn about public preferences, with mayors engaging residents in conversation to understand their needs.⁵³⁵⁴ In other words, social media data serves as a proxy for assessing public engagement because face-to-face interactions between mayors and residents cannot be measured.
2. The public may engage more critically with the issues they perceive; the more salient issues tend to attract greater attention.⁵⁵⁵⁶ This could explain why Energy and Environment was the top public priority, as diverse natural phenomena occurred from 2024 to 2025. Record-breaking storms like Beryl, Helene, and Milton, along with wildfires affecting the Los Angeles metropolitan area and San Diego County in California, inflicted severe damage on communities and garnered significant attention on social media. However, if energy and environment are perceived as having significant infrastructure impacts then two of the three mayoral priorities align with resident priorities – infrastructure/ environmental resilience and housing. This result underscores the importance of local officials' connection with the community, ensuring that the priorities of both sides can align.

Appendix B: Mayoral Priorities Over the Last Decade

Mayoral Top Priorities Remain Largely the Same Across Time

MAYORAL PRIORITY RANKINGS, YEARS 2014-2025

Category	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Average
Economic Development	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	4	1	1	1.6
Infrastructure	4	2	4	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	2.3
Public Safety	3	3	2	2	5	7	5	3	4	3	5	4	3.8
Budgets/Management		4	3	4	3	5	7	2	3	2	7	5	4.1
Housing	6	6	6	5	4	6	3	5	6	6	3	2	4.8
Health/Human Services	8	10	10	8	6	3	8	7	5	5	4	6	6.7
Energy/Environment		8	7	7	8	4	4	8	7	7	6	8	6.7
Education	5	5	5	6	7	9	9	6	10	8	8	7	7.1
Demographics		9	8	9	10	8	6	10	9				8.6
Government Data/Technology		7	9	10	9	10	10	9	8	9	9	9	9.0

Source: NLC State of the Cities reports 2014-2025.

Note: The results reflect solely the analysis of the Mayoral Speeches. The numbers indicate the ranking for each topic. Number one signifies the most important topic for the mayors, while number ten denotes the topic that the mayors address the least in their speeches.

Appendix C: Figure Tables

TABLE 1:
Economic Development, Infrastructure, and Housing Among
Top Mayoral Priorities in 2025. [FIGURE 1]

Priority Category	Mayoral Speeches (%)	Mayors' Survey (%)
Economic Development	34%	15%
Housing	16%	14%
Infrastructure	12%	16%
Public Safety	11%	n/a
Budget-Management	7.8%	15%
Health-Human Services	6.7%	n/a
Education	5.2%	11%
Energy-Environment	4.3%	13%
Data-Technology	2.9%	n/a
Public Health & Safety	n/a	15%

Source: Content Analysis of Mayoral Speeches for 2025 (N=53), and State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey (N=238).

TABLE 2:
Attracting Businesses and Insufficient Federal and Private Investment Among
Major Economic Challenges Facing Cities. [FIGURE 2]

Economic challenges	% Responses
Attracting businesses	62%
Insufficient federal and/or private investment	45%
Insufficient childcare providers	35%
Poverty	32%
Other (please specify)	26%
Underemployment/Unemployment	21%
Inequality	17%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure Notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. Sample size (N): 193 responses.

TABLE 3:
Responses Rating the City's Economic Situation as Acceptable,
Good or Excellent Increased by 5% Compared to Last Year.

	2024		2025	
	Count	% Responses	Count	% Responses
Very poor	8	1%	8	4%
Poor	21	18%	21	11%
Acceptable	51	30%	56	29%
Good	63	37%	76	39%
Excellent	23	14%	34	17%
Total	170	100%	195	100%

Source: State of the Cities 2024 and 2025 Mayoral Survey. (N_2024=170; N_2025=195).

TABLE 4:
Business Attraction, Downtown Revitalization, and Workforce Development
Among the Most Utilized Strategies by Mayors to Address Economic
Development Challenges. [FIGURE 3]

Strategies	% Responses
Business attraction and retention (providing financial assistance to encourage businesses, assistance with permits, licensing, connecting businesses with relevant networks and resources)	67%
Downtown revitalization (arts investments, business improvement districts, etc.)	56%
Workforce development (skills training / wrap-around supports for workers)	55%
Investments in tourism and hospitality	44%
Innovation and technology (entrepreneurship services and/or incubator programs)	37%
Increased green and sustainable development	26%
Other (please specify)	11%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. Sample size (N): 189 responses.

TABLE 5:
Majority of Respondents Feel Somewhat Prepared Toward
Natural Disaster or Emergencies [FIGURE 4]

Preparedness	% Responses
Very prepared	25%
Somewhat prepared	54%
Not very prepared	17%
Not prepared at all	4%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Sample size (N): 215 responses.

TABLE 6:
Insufficient Capital Budget Rated as The Most Significant
Financial Challenge for Infrastructure Projects.

Infrastructure Category	% Responses
Insufficient capital budget	67%
High debt levels or financial constraints	28%
Competition for limited financial resources in city budget	45%
Inadequate grant or loan availability	51%
Limits by state on raising revenue locally	26%
Delays in funding approval	23%
Rising costs of project, materials and labor	70%
Uncertainty in future funding	48%
Unreliable state or private sector business partnership	13%
Other	3%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Sample size (N): 215 responses.

TABLE 7:
Sixty-nine Percent of Mayors Indicated That The End of ARPA in 2026
Is Likely to Negatively Impact Their Budgets.

Category	Most Likely	Likely	Not at all
Infrastructure	52%	29%	18%
Budget & Management	33%	36%	31%
Economic & Workforce Development	29%	38%	33%
Early Childhood, K-12 & Postsecondary Education	24%	33%	42%
Housing	34%	31%	35%
Public Health & Safety	31%	35%	34%
Energy and environment	33%	34%	34%

Source: NLC Municipal Infrastructure Conditions Survey, January-March 2025.

Figure Notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. Sample size (N): 216 responses.

TABLE 8:
To Cope With Budget Uncertainties and Risks, City Leaders Most Commonly
Maintain a Contingency Fund for Emergencies or Unforeseen Events

Preparedness category	% Responses
We maintain a contingency fund that can be used in case of emergencies or unforeseen events.	78%
We diversify our revenue sources	32%
We reduce dependence on volatile or unreliable sources	31%
We implement flexible and adaptive policies that can be adjusted or modified according to changing circumstances	47%
We seek external support or assistance from other levels of government or organizations.	45%
Other	1%

Source: NLC Municipal Infrastructure Conditions Survey, January-March 2025.

Figure Notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. Sample size (N): 195 responses.

TABLE 9:
High Costs and Lack of Supply among the Main
Housing Challenges for Cities. [FIGURE 5]

Housing challenges	% Responses
High cost of housing	72%
Lack of housing supply	70%
Vacant, abandoned, and/or deteriorated properties	37%
Community opposition and/or NIMBYism (NIMBY = Not In My Back Yard)	28%
Homelessness	23%
Low quality of housing	22%
Land use restrictions (e.g., zoning)	13%
Other (please specify)	9%
Displacement	8%
Evictions	6%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. Sample size (N): 172 responses.

TABLE 10:
Fifty-seven Percent of Survey Respondents Rated the Availability of
Housing in Their Community as Poor or Very Poor.

Availability Rating	% Responses
Very poor	13%
Poor	44%
Acceptable	30%
Good	12%
Excellent	1%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Sample size (N): 174 responses.

TABLE 11:
Substance Use, Mental Health and Cybersecurity Among the Most Concerning Public Health/Safety Issues for American Mayors. [FIGURE 6]

Concern Category	Not at all concerned	Slightly/Moderately Concerned	Very/Extremely Concerned
Mental health	4%	40%	56%
Substance use	1%	45%	54%
Other (please specify)	30%	20%	50%
Cybersecurity	2%	59%	39%
Suicide	5%	58%	38%
Emergency preparedness (inclusive of natural disasters)	6%	57%	37%
Violence	9%	57%	34%
Property crime	6%	64%	29%
Traffic accidents	10%	61%	29%
Clearance rates	25%	62%	13%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Sample size (N) varies depending on the category, ranging from N=110 for "Violence" to N=10 for "Other".

TABLE 12:
Retention, Recruitment and Creation or Expansion of Alternative Crisis Response Teams Among Areas that Require the Most Attention. [FIGURE 7]

Focus areas	% Responses
Retention and recruitment of a diverse public health and safety workforce	43%
Creation or expansion of alternative crisis response teams	36%
Development of a community violence intervention plan	28%
Police accountability	24%
Reentry programming for returning citizens	13%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. Sample size (N): 95 responses.

TABLE 13:
Energy/Environment and Education Garnered The Most
Attention from Citizens in 2024-2025. [FIGURE 8]

Priority Category	% Responses
Energy and Environment	30%
Education	28%
Housing	28%
Public Health and Safety	21%
Economic Development and Workforce	20%
Budget and Management	13%
Infrastructure	8%

Source: Data gathered from the Quorum Local Platform from March 30, 2024, to March 30, 2025.

Figure notes: Public Engagement on X (i.e., the platform formerly known as Twitter) measures the ratio of posts issued by local authorities to the number of times these posts were shared by residents within each category. The sample for tweets differs from one another, ranging from the highest one found for the Economic Development and Workforce category, with a total of 1,674 tweets, to the smallest sample of 46 tweets for the Budget and Management category.

TABLE 14:
Social Media and Town Hall Meetings among The Top Outlets Used
by Mayors to Engage With Their Residents. [FIGURE 9]

Priority Category	% Responses
Social media	90%
Town hall meetings	58%
Press releases	70%
Newsletters	76%
Other	16%

Source: State of the Cities 2025 Mayoral Survey.

Figure Notes: Percentages are calculated as the proportion of all total responses to the question. Respondents were able to select multiple options, thus the total of the count column is greater than the total number of respondents. Sample size (N): 189 responses.

Endnotes

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For each category, we focus only on specific hashtags to be more accurate in the topic. For each category, the hashtags utilized were the following:

Infrastructure: #infrastructure, #publicworks

Budget and Management: #budget, #finance

Economic Development and Workforce: #economicdevelopment, #hiring, #workforce, #workforcedevelopment, #jobs, #jobalert, #smallbusiness, #shoplocal

Housing: #Housing, #Affordablehousing, #homelessness, #homeless

Education: #education, #teachers

Energy and Environment: #energy, #cleanenergy, #sustainability, #environment, #renewables, #climate

Public Health and Safety: #publichealth, #publicsafety, #mentalhealth, #lawenforcement, #unitypolicing

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